HOW TO SHOOT LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHS
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OK, so you think you’ve found the perfect shooting location for a movie, TV show, commercial, catalog shoot or music video. Maybe it’s an old plantation house, a beautiful mountain farm, town square, creepy swamp or ultra-modern office building. But finding a unique location in your community is only the beginning. This document will tell you how to find visually unique and film friendly locations in your area, and how to shoot them.

Being a Camera Ready Community requires you or your staff to upload and maintain location photographs from your area in Reel Scout, an online location photo database used by the Georgia Film, Music & Digital Entertainment Office (GFMDE) to send photos to clients. You can log in to the system at http://filmimages.itt.state.ga.us. If you do not have a username/password, please contact our office for access (only the Camera Ready liaison is given access, but your staff can log in with your username/password). You can find Reel Scout instructions in the Camera Ready Resource Library at http://www.georgia.org/cameraready.

SCOUTING LOCATIONS

GFMDE scouts locations throughout the state either because we are looking for specific locations called for in a script, or we are adding new photos to our database for future projects. For general scouting in your community, read the document "What Locations We Look For" in the Camera Ready Resource Library to get an idea of what potential shooting locations you might have.

We receive location requests for just about every shooting location imaginable, representing all parts of the world. Production companies are not always looking for something Georgia-specific or even Southern. They may want a location to double for New York City, Iowa farmland, Vietnamese jungles or New England villages. When scouting for locations, send us what is unique to your area and what can stand in for other parts of the world.

You may have found a location that would look fabulous on film, but there are other, more mundane considerations:

1. Are the property owners “film friendly”? Are they open to most any kind of project (within reason) or would they object to profanity, violence, nudity or other content? You don’t have to run around asking everyone about their convictions, but if there is someone you know for sure, without a doubt, would object to certain content then make a note of it.

2. Is there an area near the location for the production company to use as “base camp”? Meaning a convenient area for truck parking, catering, trailers and everything else a production will bring? Or will people have to be transported long distances?
3. Are there noise issues? Is there an active train track or noisy highway nearby? Is the location below an airport flight path?

4. Does the location have other potentially negative features that would need to be avoided during shooting? For example, power/telephone lines near the front door, modern buildings that would have to be shot around for a period movie, etc.?

5. Is the location accessible to crew? Are there navigable roads leading up to it? Think about the heavy equipment, supplies and cables that a shoot requires. Grueling hikes through the woods to get to a location would make shooting difficult.

When shooting location photos for inclusion in our database, any helpful information, including negative aspects to the property, should be noted with the photos. This information can be entered in the database so it’s only visible internally.

**SHOOTING LOCATION PHOTOGRAPHS**

Panoramic photography is still the way most production companies prefer to view photos. This way, the director can get a good sense of what wide shots of the property will look like. Before digital cameras became standard, GFMDE staff had to shoot around five vertical frames with traditional film cameras, slightly overlapping each image, get the film processed and tape the photos together in manila folders. Then production companies could literally fold out the panoramic shots to see what a wide angle view would look like.

Thankfully digital cameras have made this job easier. Instead of physically taping photos together, you can stitch photos into digital panoramas using special software, or some cameras stitch the photos themselves! But the original concept remains – give the director a wide view of the location encompassing all positive and negative features. Here is an example of a stitched panorama:
If you can’t figure out how to stitch photographs, single shots are acceptable. Just make sure to include some wide shots in your location coverage. Wide shots can be used to show the approach to a property, while closer shots can reveal more detail:

You can shoot numerous photos of a location to include in Reel Scout, including the “hero” shots that show the location as you wish for it to be seen - for example, a town street that looks like the South of the 1800s. However, if that same street has a new Starbucks on the corner, include it in your coverage. Don’t completely shoot around it and fool the production company into thinking that a location looks different than it actually is.

Here are some other guidelines for submitting locations to Reel Scout:

1. Submit one specific location at a time. Multiple sites on a single, specific property (such as a private mansion with a nice lake in the backyard) are acceptable. But for photos of a general location such as a town or neighborhood, please submit only pertinent photos for that location. For example, if a town has a nice river or museum nearby that is not visible from the town streets, submit that location separately rather than under a general town heading.
2. Include multiple shots of a location from different angles. Any locations with just one photo submission can’t be used.

3. If submitting a home or other building, please include interior and exterior shots. If interior shooting is not allowed, please make a note of this under "Usage Restriction."

4. Send large, monitor-quality photos so we can see more location detail. If you know how to adjust image settings, here are some general standards:

   a) 144-150 dpi
   b) File size between 200KB - 1 MB
   c) JPEG compression = 7 good quality
   d) 1280 X 1024 resolution
   e) Physical photo size: 8.5" X 11"

5. Do not include photos shot in inclement weather (rain, snow, fog, etc.).

6. Location photos are sometimes different than shots used for tourism or marketing purposes. Concentrate on shooting the actual location itself and not people, festivals, pets, etc.

7. Once the photos are uploaded, file them into categories in Reel Scout. You can use multiple categories if the location calls for it. For example, the mansion with the nice lake can be submitted under “mansion” and “lake.”

FINALLY...

Georgia is the largest state east of the Mississippi River, encompassing 159 counties and hundreds of miles of unique and diverse landscapes. No one office can cover it all, which is why we are relying on you, the Camera Ready liaison, to help us discover what is unique to your community.